

Case Study

Co-operative Group

As well as being the UK's largest co-op food retailer, the Co-operative Group is also the UK's largest independent travel retailer, a funeral director, a pharmacist and a bank.

The Co-operative Group has removed their contractual retirement age altogether.

"We have taken age out of how we view our people. It simply doesn't make sense to retire an employee because of their age – all that should matter is competency to do their job," says Amanda Jones, Head of Diversity at the Co-operative Group.

"Why lose skills and experience from our business, and pay to recruit a new person who will take months to be trained when you already have someone who is ready and willing to perform to a high standard. We benefit massively by retaining valuable skills and experience that would otherwise have been lost. We are responding to their need, but also to our business need."

Employees who choose to continue working are able to continue in the Group's pension scheme, and it is also possible to draw pension whilst continuing to work for the Group.

"We believe it simply doesn't make sense to retire an employee because of their age - all that should matter is our people's capability to do their job."

Amanda Jones, Head of Diversity, Co-operative Group

When it comes to recruitment, the Group has re-designed their job application forms so that date of birth is not visible to recruitment managers, and 'age-proofed' the way it assesses pay by focusing on the performance and contribution of staff, rather than how old they are. The company uses a performance management process which takes into consideration not only how well someone has performed, but how they went about doing it